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Gibraltar Veterinary Hospital

New Year, New You...And Fido And Fluffy!

Top New Year's Resolutions:

1. Spend more time with friends and family
2. Fit in fitness
3. Tame the bulge
4. Quit smoking
5. Enjoy more life
6. Get out of debt
7. Learn something new
8. Help others

It's that time of year again; time for us to plan for changes to better our lives in the coming year. Getting healthy, losing weight, tackling debt, saving money, making time for ourselves, friends, and family are usually among the most sought goals.

The same goals can be just as important for our pets as they are for us and our pets can actually help keep us on the right track and achieve our own goals.

The same as their humans, a slim, fit, active pet can live a much longer, higher-quality life.

Obesity is a medical condition, which in pets leads to many preventable, painful, and costly ailments (arthritis, diabetes, heart, respiratory and gastrointestinal disease, hypertension, increased risk of cancer, and disk disease just to name a few).

Often when a pet becomes ill, their humans have to make heart-

wrenching decisions about whether or not they can afford to treat illness in their pets. All too often, the illness could have been prevented.

Bi-annual wellness exams may seem like an unnecessary expense, but these exams are aimed at detecting illness in your pet before it becomes unmanageable, or worse yet, life-threatening.

Research shows that people who exercise with their pets will actually exercise longer and harder and stick to their fitness goals more than those people who exercise solely with other people!

Weight loss is one thing you can do for your pet to help stave off illness. Sure, it's tough, but can add years to your pet's life, make those years more enjoyable, and even add dollars to your wallet!

Weight loss should be broken up into smaller, easily attainable goals to avoid a feeling of failure and eventually giving up.

Always start a weight loss and exercise program with a visit to your vet to look for underlying health conditions (thyroid, heart disease, arthritis) that will hamper your success.



Exercising Your Pet

Exercise can give your pet energy, expend nervous energy, maintain a healthy weight, keep muscles and joints flexible, extend their lives, and above all, make them feel better.

Research shows that people who exercise with their pets are more likely to keep up their own new routine and be successful in their own weight loss and fitness goals. Without someone to lead the way, our overweight pets aren't likely to work out on their own.

Always start off slow. Moderately paced walking and swimming are a good way to build your dogs cardiovascular and muscle strength without putting undue stress on their joints. A daily ten- to 15-minute session is a good start; building up over a few months.

Don't let your pet overdo it. Weekend warriors have a tendency to overdo it and injure themselves. Additionally, never let your pet exercise just after eating.

Always keep your pet on a leash when you're out. Concrete, gravel and asphalt are tough on the paws, especially on hot days. Opt for dirt paths or grass.

Take it easy in extreme weather. If it's freezing cold or hot and steamy out,

either keep your walk short or play a little indoor fetch instead. Never play tug-o-war; it can damage teeth, teach aggressive behavior, and injure your pets neck or back.

The more active your dog is, the more water he'll need, even in winter. Make sure he has plenty of fresh water before and after your walk. If you're going for a long walk, take some water along.

Cats are designed for short, frequent periods of intense activity, rather than longer, slower-paced exercise sessions. You don't have to reach in your wallet for toys to entertain your cat. Entice them with things they can bat, chase, explore, or scratch. Just make sure that it's nothing they could chew up or swallow. Using your hand or fingers as "bait" teaches him that it is okay to scratch and bite your hands.

Just as with any animal-or person-you'll want a doctor's okay before you start your pet's new fitness routine.



Did you know?

For the average dog, walking burns 2x as many calories than rest? Jogging or playing Frisbee burns 3x as many calories, and swimming or agility burns 6x as many calories!

Winter Arthritis Pain

Arthritis pain can put a glitch in even the best laid out fitness plan. But, arthritis pain doesn't have to keep you and your best friend on the sidelines!

Arthritis is an inflammation of the joints. This may be caused by injury, obesity, breed disposition, or disease. These conditions may lead to instability in the joints. The body's response to instability is to lay down new bone in an effort to stabilize joints.

As the newly formed bone rubs on old bone and the soft tissue surrounding joints, it causes inflammation, which leads to pain and discomfort. Sentencing your pet to a life on the couch, because of pain, only acts to make the problem worse!

Arthritic pets need activity to build muscle mass, stabilizing the joints, and keeping them at a healthy weight. Medications, diet, and dietary supplements are available to help keep your pet pain-free. Talk to your veterinarian about an individualized pain prevention plan for your pet.

Never give your pet any medication without talking to your vet. Many medications can be harmful to your pet and interact with their current medications.



Fat Cats and Pudgy Pooches

Obesity is the most common medical conditions affecting pets. Often our pets get a little pudgy because we love them so much, maybe a little too much. A couple of extra pounds could be deadly!

An extra five pounds on a dog that should weigh 17 pounds is similar to an extra 50 pounds on a person who should weigh 170 pounds.

It is much easier to prevent obesity than to 'cure' it when it causes your pet pain and disease (arthritis, diabetes, etc). Just as with people, controlling your pet's caloric intake and making sure he gets the right amount of exercise is the best way to help keep your pet at a healthy weight.

In fact, it takes more calories to keep a fit pet fit than to keep an overweight pet overweight! Cutting calories below your pet's resting metabolic needs will decrease your pet's metabolism, causing additional weight gain.

Never free-choice feed; pets should be fed 2-3 smaller measured meals at the same time daily for the most efficient weight loss.

Use treat time to promote bonding. It's hard to resist those big sad eyes, but food does not equal love. Your attention and kind words are what your pet really craves!



Try to avoid food as a reward altogether. If you have to treat your pet, do so only occasionally, and use a piece of raw carrot or apple or frozen raw green bean. Never treat your pet with onions, grapes, or table scraps.

It is important that your pet's treats are taken out of their daily caloric allotment, not added to it.

Keep your pet in another room when preparing or eating your own meals to avoid falling victim to those big sad eyes. If you have several pets, feed them separately.

Your veterinarian can determine if your pet is overweight as well as run laboratory tests

to determine if there is a medical reason for your pet's increased weight.

Your veterinarian can calculate your pet's ideal resting metabolic caloric needs as well as recommend a special diet that is lower in calories and higher in fiber as well as any necessary medications.

Your pet may refuse a new food. Prevent this by introducing the new food gradually by mixing your pet's former food with increasing proportions of the new food, until only the new food is being fed.

Your pet's diet is just half the battle. Regular exercise is also important to help keep your pet in shape.

Dog Translator

Snacks fed to a 20lb dog	Human Equivalent*	
	Number of Hamburgers	Number of Chocolate bars (2oz.)
1 small cookie		
1oz cheddar cheese		
1 hot dog		

Cat Translator

Snacks fed to a 10lb cat	Human Equivalent*	
	Number of Hamburgers	Number of Chocolate bars (2oz.)
1 potato chip		
1oz cheddar cheese		
1 cup milk		

*An average woman

Treat your pet right

Each year, we spend a countless amount of money on treats and snacks to show our pets how much we love them. Unfortunately, treats aren't made yummy by adding fruits and veggies. Excess fats and salt are added to make them irresistible. Show your pets how much you love them with a short walk, a game of fetch, or some kind words, not fat, salt, artificial flavors and colors!



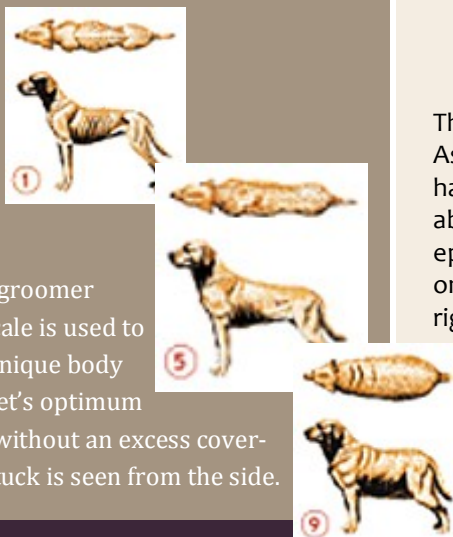
PetFit.com

The American Veterinary Medical Association and Hill's Pet Nutrition have teamed up to raise awareness about the growing pet obesity epidemic. The partnership focuses on raising awareness about the right way to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and a healthy pet through; proper nutrition, increased physical activity, and regular veterinary visits. Visit www.petfit.com for tips, e-tools, and special offers.

Q: What is BCS?

A: Body condition score.

You may have noticed your veterinarian, technician, and groomer determine your pet's body condition. A body condition scale is used to determine if your pet is overweight based on their own unique body structure. GVH uses a scale from 1-9, with 5 being your pet's optimum weight. A pet with a BCS of 5 has ribs that are easily felt, without an excess covering of fat. A waist is seen from above, and an abdominal tuck is seen from the side.



AAHA Accreditation

The Leading Edge of Veterinary Medicine



The Gibraltar Veterinary Hospital is one of only a handful of hospitals in the United States and Canada to earn accreditation from the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).

AAHA is the only organization that accredits veterinary hospitals throughout the U.S. and Canada.

AAHA is well known for setting the standard of veterinary excellence and quality pet care. AAHA accredited hospitals voluntarily choose to be evaluated on over 800 standards in the following areas: quality of care; diagnostic & pharmacy; management; medical records and facility.

AAHA accreditation ensures that your pet is getting the best quality care available.

What does this mean to you?

AAHA standards require in-house diagnostic services and an on-site pharmacy so that your pet may be quickly diagnosed and treated.

Medical records are required to be complete and thorough, which allows your vet to better understand how your pet's medical history impacts their current health.

AAHA standards focus on quality of care in anesthesia, contagious disease, dentistry, pain management, surgery, and emergency care.

This ensures that the best in medical care is available for you and your pet at an AAHA accredited hospital.

coming soon >>>

Fling Into Spring:

Spring Cleaning For a Healthy Smile

*An Ounce of Prevention:
Demystifying Parasite
Prevention and Disease*

Spring Allergies



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